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SEN. JACQUE'S 'PRETENDERS FACE PENALTIES' ACT SIGNED INTO LAW

New law protects individuals, communities from falling victim to fake public officers

MADISON, WI... Any individual falsely posing as a public officer or utility employee could now face felony charges under a measure signed into law today.

State Sen. André Jacque (R-De Pere), co-author of the Pretenders Face Penalties Act ([Assembly Bill 251](#)) with Rep. Calvin Callahan and Sen. Melissa Agard, said the new law closes a loophole in state statute, which previously provided no criminal penalty for a person who intentionally misleads others into believing they are a public official, officer, or employee.

“There was a case where an individual was impersonating a state representative at local organizations and businesses in an attempt to request tours and receive discounts on products and services, and to gain priority access to local establishments,” Sen. Jacque said. “Unfortunately, because this individual was not purporting to act in an official capacity, it was not illegal.”

Other known occurrences involve individuals claiming to be building inspectors, utility workers, and even a Labor Department official to gain access to homes and worksites.

Sen. Jacque said it was important to close this loophole in our state statutes in order to protect our local communities from such fraudulent and deceptive behavior.

“This is another common-sense solution that passed the State Legislature with wide bipartisan support,” Sen. Jacque said. “It was also supported by a broad array of stakeholders, including the League of Wisconsin Municipalities, Wisconsin Professional Police Association, Wisconsin Electric Cooperative Association, Wisconsin Chiefs of Police Association, Professional Fire Fighters of Wisconsin, Dairyland Power Cooperative, the City of Milwaukee, and the Cooperative Network.”

Senator André Jacque represents Northeast Wisconsin's First Senate District, consisting of Door and Kewaunee Counties and portions of Brown, Calumet, Manitowoc, and Outagamie counties.

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